

VZCZCXRO9170
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHLO #0127/01 0161630
ZNY CCCCC ZZB
P 161630Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0947
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 000127

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/16/2019

TAGS: PGOV AF IR KPAQ PHUM PREL PROP TI UK

SUBJECT: IRAN: BBC PERSIAN TV BEGINS OPERATIONS

REF: EMB LONDON (GAYLE) EMAIL TO DEPT 12/24/08 Classified By: Political Counselor Richard Mills, Jr. for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. BBC Persian TV launched its well-resourced broadcast operations January 14. Both anti-regime exiles and the Tehran regime cc Iranians' Criticism, BBC's High Hopes; BBC Radio Farsi Unaffected -----

¶2. (C) BBC Persian TV, boasting a sharply expanded staff and lavish studio facilities on Regent Street in London, launched its 8-hour per day

¶3. (SBU) BBC World Service Head Nigel Chapman, as reported in UK press, said the BBC aims at 11 million viewers by 2011 in Afghanistan, Iran Jamming Not An Issue -----

¶4. (C) Karimi told Poloff jamming is not expected to be a problem; he said BBC will jump its broadcasts back and forth between two satellites Large Budget but No Tehran Office; Many Recent Hires Fresh from Iran -----

¶5. (C/NF) BBC Persian TV has a USD 23 Million (GBP 15 million) annual budget. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2007 had told Poloff BE

¶6. (C) One staffer at BBC Persian, whom Poloff first met in November, is a 20-something who stated she had never traveled to the West, and ha BBC Enjoys Prestige, Claims "Balanced, Friendly" Coverage, Calls VOA Persian "Slanted" -----

¶7. (C) Somewhat ironically, according to press sources and Embassy Iranian blogger contacts, BBC is the overwhelmingly preferred source for f Comment -----

¶8. (C/NF) The long delay to BBC's start of operations, from 2006 to 2008, may have arisen, in addition to budgetary challenges, from unsucces TUTTLE